Airport Signs and Markings

Being able to interpret airport signs and markings at a glance is one of the best ways to steer clear of a runway incursion. Test your knowledge with this Safety Quiz.

1. The sign at right tells you that:

   There are 3,000 feet of runway remaining

   A black square containing a white number is a runway distance remaining sign. Located along the side of the runway, it indicates (in thousands of feet) how much usable runway remains at that point. These signs are typically seen at larger airports.

2. While taxiing, you see this array of signs. You are currently:

   On Taxiway G at its intersection with Runway 10 - 28

   The black square with the “G” is a taxiway location sign: It indicates that you’re on a particular taxiway (an easy way to remember this is “Black square, you’re there”). Here, the taxiway location sign is coupled with a runway holding position sign, which indicates that you’ve reached an intersection with Runway 10-28. The arrival end of Runway 10 is to the left, and the arrival end of Runway 28 is to the right. Remember: If you see a red sign like this, you must be certain that it’s okay to proceed.

3. Are you allowed to taxi in the area shown?

   No

   Yellow chevron pavement markings signify a runway blast pad or stopway. You are not allowed to taxi in these areas. Most of them are not easily accessible, but in some cases it might be possible to inadvertently enter one. They should not be confused with displaced thresholds, which can be used for taxi, takeoff, and landing from the opposite direction.

4. While taxiing in low visibility conditions, you look out and see the marking at right. You are:

   (Choose the best answer, then click submit)

   On one runway, about to taxi across another

   There’s an easy way to remember which side of a hold short marking is which: “Dash across the dashed lines”—meaning, cross the dashed lines after landing to get OFF the runway. However, the fact that you’re on the “solid” side of the marking doesn’t necessarily mean you’re sitting on a taxiway. In this case, the hold short markings are painted on an intersecting runway, not a taxiway. The tipoff here is the white centerline: If you were on a taxiway, it would be yellow.
5. You land at a busy towered airport and slow to taxi speed. As you roll past an exit, you realize that ATC has not given you instructions to turn off the runway. You should:

**Continue and exit at the next taxiway (assuming you still haven’t heard from ATC)**

Particularly at busy airports, it’s not uncommon to land and slow to taxi speed without receiving runway exit instructions from the controller. If this happens, you should exit onto the first available taxiway, ensure the aircraft is entirely across the holding position marking, stop, and await (or ask for) instructions. Unless instructed to do so, never exit onto an intersecting runway, turn around on the runway, or stop on the runway.

6. After completing an ILS approach and landing in poor weather, you taxi off the runway near the departure end and see the pavement markings at right. Assuming ATC has given no taxi instructions, you should:

**Taxi past the runway holding position marking, but not cross the ILS holding position marking.**

In the absence of specific instructions from ATC, you should exit the runway at the first available taxiway, ensure the aircraft is entirely across the holding position marking, stop, and await (or ask for) instructions. Even though the weather is poor and the ILS for the opposite runway may be in use, you should not continue on the taxiway after crossing the runway holding position until told to do so by ATC. When taxiing to a runway, however, don’t hold short of the ILS holding position marking unless ATC instructs you to.

7. The pavement marking at right is:

**The boundary of the movement area at a towered field**

A single solid line paired with a single dashed line marks the boundary of the movement area at a towered field. The dashed side is the movement side: You need a clearance to taxi there (none is required on the solid side).

8. You would expect to see the sign at right when:

**On a runway**

A black sign with a yellow border and number is a runway location sign: It tells you which runway you’re currently on (again, remember: “Black square, you’re there”). These signs are typically seen in places where the proximity of two runways could cause pilots to be confused as to their location.
9. When you see the sign at right, you are:

**About to enter the protected area for arrivals to Rwy 15 and departures from Rwy 33**

Signs like these are used where a taxiway or runway crosses the approach area of a runway (i.e., the extended centerline of the runway near its arrival end). Taxiing past this sign (and its accompanying holding position marking) if you’ve been instructed to hold short could cause problems for arriving or departing aircraft.

10. Which of the images below depicts an enhanced taxiway centerline? (click on the correct image, then click Submit)

**Taxiway centerline**

Typically seen at larger airports, enhanced taxiway centerlines (dashed lines on either side of the centerline) are used as a secondary means of helping pilots identify an upcoming runway threshold. They begin up to 150 feet prior to the runway holding position marking. If you see them, be prepared to stop unless you’ve been cleared to cross the associated runway.